

NATIONAL news

to dream to protect our entire LGBT community with one bill to cover everyone, legislators respond. The activists in Illinois have done a tremendous job."

Illinois becomes the fifth state to pass explicit transgender-inclusive language in its discrimination law, joining California, Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island. In addition, 72 cities and counties have transgender-inclusive nondiscrimination laws on the books. With the addition of Illinois, 27 percent of the U.S. population now lives in a jurisdiction with transgender discrimination protection. Eight states have enacted transgender-inclusive hate crime laws.

In addition, 10 states ban anti-gay discrimination—Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Hawaii, New Jersey, Vermont, New Hampshire, Nevada, Maryland and New York.

—SD

SOCIAL CONSERVATIVE CLAUDE ALLEN TO WHITE HOUSE

Claude Allen will become the chief domestic policy adviser in the Bush White House, according to an announcement made Jan. 5. Gay and AIDS advocates are concerned by the possible implications for community issues.

Allen, 44, is a social conservative and African American. He has served the past four years as the No. 2 person at the Department of Health and Human Services, where he was a strong supporter of abstinence-only HIV prevention programs and restrictions on abortions.

The agency also has conducted "audits" of AIDS services organizations and activities that many within the community have characterized as harassing in nature.

Allen was nominated to be a federal judge on the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in 2003. But Maryland's two Democratic senators blocked the nomination because the seat traditionally had been filled by a Marylander. Other Democrats supported their claim, as they did not wish to see yet another strong conservative vote added to what many observers see as the most right-wing federal circuit court in the country.

Allen served as Virginia's secretary of health in the 1990s. In the 1980s he was one of the first black staffers for conservative U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C. As press secretary during the 1984 election, Allen said Helms' opponent had ties to "queers" and "radical feminists."

Allen was asked about those remarks during his judicial confirmation hearing. He said he did not believe the words were derogatory, nor had he intended to use them in a derogatory manner.

That has not allayed the concerns of community advocates. They remember that Gary Bauer used that position to influence policy decisions during the Reagan administration.

"I hope it is not a sign of social policy for this administration," said Terje Anderson, executive director of the National Association of People with AIDS.

Dave Noble, executive director of National Stonewall Democrats, said: "Claude Allen has advanced ideological extremes in family policy that have endangered the health of gay youth. His record indicates that he would prompt the White House to promote anti-gay policy and

attitude within the administration. We are troubled by this appointment."

Bill Arnold of the ADAP Working Group added: "There is widespread concern since the position can be a great 'bully pulpit' and it's assumed that this is payback to neocons and conservatives who worked very hard on voter turnout for Bush. On the other hand, this administration keeps a very tight control on what its people say, so I guess we wait and see."

—Bob Roehr

COURT DECLINES TO HEAR FLORIDA ADOPTION CASE

The U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear a case challenging Florida's ban on gay couples adopting children. The state does allow gays to be foster parents.

The case was known as Lofton vs. Secretary of the Florida Department of Children and Families. Talk show host Rosie O'Donnell brought it national attention when she went to bat for plaintiffs Steve Lofton and Roger Croteau and



The Lofton-Croteau family enjoys a day out at Oaks Park

their five kids. The Portland couple wanted to adopt 13-year-old Bert, whom they had cared for as foster parents since his birth.

Observers were not surprised, as the court declines to hear the vast majority of cases that are appealed to it. In action Jan. 10, it accepted no cases, remanded one back to a lower court and declined to hear 469 appeals.

"The plain and well-understood purpose of the ban [by Florida on gays adopting] was to tell gay people to go back into the closet," said Matt Coles, who heads the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union.



Social conservative Claude Allen, appointed chief domestic policy adviser

Patricia Logue, an attorney with Lambda Legal, which filed a brief in support of the appeal, added: "This case deserved to be heard. Florida's law keeps thousands of children in state care and out of permanent, loving homes—solely because the state wants to express disapproval of gay people."

Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign, said, "The Supreme Court's refusal to hear this case marks

its refusal to heed the advice of all major child welfare organizations and health care professionals who say that gay parents are no different from other loving parents."

—BR

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